

The problem of Cthulhu

The Urth list — 57 messages, 20 voices, 19 Jun 2007

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4858>

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Gwern Branwen — 19 Jun 2007, 20:11 · in reply to don doggett

On 0, don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> scribbled:

I promise that this has to do with Wolfe. Honest. I should be doing other things, but this has been aggravating my brain, so forgive me if it rambles.

I dig Lovecraft. I abso-frickin love the mythos and I enjoy reading what other writers do with it, but so often they fail miserably. This is ironic because HP Lovecraft was not a great stylist at all. That said, even Borges wrote that his own attempt at writing a Lovecraftian story was inferior to the real thing. So . . . Lovecraft was a lousy writer, but he had a fantastic idea and he understood it completely. What makes the Great Old Ones so terrifying is that they are completely alien, unknowable, invincible, and malevolent. The only reason that they haven't wiped us out is that they are prevented by other equally unknowable forces who, while not actively malevolent, regard us as nothing particularly special. We are alone, unloved, helpless, and our only salvation is that we are by and large disregarded. That's scary stuff.

Enter August Derleth, who took over Lovecraft's legacy. All of a sudden the Great Old Ones are elementals of some sort. There's still some good stuff in Derleth; the Necronomicon, weird disappearances, madness, and a damned entertaining love story between two of the frog people that serve Cthulhu, but suddenly the forces of evil are knowable. We can contain them in our head and they just aren't as primally fear inducing.

Recently, I've been reading Brian Lumley's Titus Crow series, which directly involves the Cthulhu mythos. Not good. Not good at all. Lumley's a better writer than Lovecraft, better than Derleth too, but not only are the Cthulhu deities knowable, they have supervillian motivations. And not just that, they can be fought, with technology apparently. Cthulhu is now essentially a giant alien psychic squid. Lumley's Lovecraft fails for me for the same reason the various versions of the Necronomicon fail. They explain away all the mystery, and thus all the horror.

Now, some writer's get it right. Neil Gaiman's A Study in Emerald is brilliant. It involves Sherlock Holmes, the Great Old Ones and a twist that is just incredible. And it's creepy as hell.

And Wolfe. While they're not technically the Great Old Ones, Erebus, Abaia, Scylla, and the Mother, are all obvious analogs. Their motivations are largely unknowable, their nature is unknown, and for that reason they are majestic and terrifying. Wolfe understands Lovecraft, and it leads to some pretty creepy scenes throughout the BoTNS and several in the Short Sun books as well. I think no one will ever truly be able to explain Erebus and the rest, because they are meant to be unexplainable. They simply are. Btw, has Wolfe ever written a straight up Lovecraftian tale?

thanks for your time
Don

In the same vein, one of the few writers I've found who does Lovecraftiana well is strangely enough, Charles Stross.. His blend of geeky humor, Sci-fi, and the Cthulhu mythos somehow works out.

gwern
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don doggett — 19 Jun 2007, 20:38

I promise that this has to do with Wolfe. Honest. I should be doing other things, but this has been aggravating my brain, so forgive me if it rambles.

I dig Lovecraft. I abso-frickin love the mythos and I enjoy reading what other writers do with it, but so often they fail miserably. This is ironic because HP Lovecraft was not a great stylist at all. That said, even Borges wrote that his own attempt at writing a Lovecraftian story was inferior to the real thing. So . . . Lovecraft was a lousy writer, but he had a fantastic idea and he understood it completely. What makes the Great Old Ones so terrifying is that they are completely alien, unknowable, invincible, and malevolent. The only reason that they haven't wiped us out is that they are prevented by other equally unknowable forces who, while not actively malevolent, regard us as nothing particularly special. We are alone, unloved, helpless, and our only salvation is that we are by and large disregarded. That's scary stuff.

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thanks for your time
Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

JBarach at aol.com — 19 Jun 2007, 20:50 · follows don doggett

In a message dated 6/19/2007 1:40:21 P.M. Pacific Daylight Time, kingwukong at yahoo.com writes:

Btw, has Wolfe ever written a straight up Lovecraftian tale?

"Lord of the Land" in *_Starwater Strains_* is a deliberately Lovecraftian tale, which is also published in *_Cthulhu 2000_* and reprinted in *_Lovecraft's Legacy_*.

John

Matthew Keeley — 19 Jun 2007, 20:50 · in reply to don doggett

I haven't read "A Study in Emerald," though as a fan of both Holmes and Lovecraft, I really should. Everyone says it's incredible. I have, however, read Gaiman's comic Cthulhu autobiography, which I think is available somewhere on his website. It's a minor work, certainly,

but I remember laughing out loud when I read it.

<http://www.neilgaiman.com/exclusive/shortstories/chulthhustory>

-Matt

On 6/19/07, don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:

Now, some writer's get it right. Neil Gaiman's A Study in Emerald is brilliant. It involves Sherlock Holmes, the Great Old Ones and a twist that is just incredible. And it's creepy as hell. And Wolfe. While they're not technically the Great Old Ones, Erebus, Abaia, Scylla, and the Mother, are all obvious analogs. Their motivations are largely unknowable, their nature is unknown, and for that reason they are majestic and terrifying. Wolfe understands Lovecraft, and it leads to some pretty creepy scenes throughout the BoTNS and several in the Short Sun books as well. I think no one will ever truly be able to explain Erebus and the rest, because they are meant to be unexplainable. They simply are. Btw, has Wolfe ever written a straight up Lovecraftian tale?

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don doggett — 19 Jun 2007, 21:09 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

--- Matthew Keeley <matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> wrote:
I haven't read "A Study in Emerald," though as a fan of both Holmes and Lovecraft, I really should. Everyone says it's incredible.

It's a masterpiece of short fiction. Gaiman's all over the place in terms of quality, but this is a prime example of why he's so highly regarded. His other Cthulhu tale is Only the End of the World Again, which uses Larry Talbot, the wolfman, and is also a continuation of, and tribute to, Harlan Ellison's Adrift Just Off the Islets of Langerhans. Oh yeah, and

Shoggoth's Old Peculiar, which is pretty funny. Both of these are in Smoke and Mirrors.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Matthew Keeley — 19 Jun 2007, 21:23 · in reply to don doggett

Don,

Thanks for the advice. I've been meaning to read some Gaiman this summer, and you've given me a good idea of where to start. I have a copy of Smoke and Mirrors at home; I might even be able to get to those stories tonight. Thanks,

-Matt

On 6/19/07, don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:

--- Matthew Keeley <matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> wrote:

I haven't read "A Study in Emerald," though as a fan of both Holmes and Lovecraft, I really should. Everyone says it's incredible.

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don doggett — 19 Jun 2007, 21:34 · in reply to Matthew Keeley

--- Matthew Keeley <matthew.keeley.1 at gmail.com> wrote:

I have, however,

read Gaiman's comic Cthulhu autobiography, which I think is available somewhere on his website. It's a minor work, certainly, but I remember laughing out loud when I read it.

<http://www.neilgaiman.com/exclusive/shortstories/chulthhustory>

That was really funny stuff. Thanks for the link.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Andy Robertson — 19 Jun 2007, 23:05 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett writes:

What makes the Great Old Ones so terrifying is that they are completely alien, unknowable, invincible, and malevolent.

The GOO are simply a modern analog of the Greek Titans or the Norse Jotuns

Or to put it another way, these pre-human forces of Chaos would in their day have been thought of much as we today think of the Great Old Ones - horrors with nothing quaint or anachronistic in their makeup.

((

I'm an Odinist, and I continually have to remind myself and my co-religionists that archaism is not correct.

Vikings, for example, (to pick a set of folk frequently and wrongly thought of as typifying Odinism), should be thought of as pirates using the highest tech weapons and transport; not quaint guys in helmets. Because that is what they were.

Think helicopter gunships and privately owned tanks not wooden ships.)))

Wolfe repeatedly follows his masters Lewis and Tolkien in Christianising pagan myth in multiple levels of narrative analogy.

His fantasies and science fictions have characters who can represent Odin or Achilles in one layer, and Christ in a higher layer (Silk > Odin > is an obvious example)

Erebus etc thus represent the classical Titans / Jotuns / GOO within the frame of the urth books. They are a theme, not simply from Lovecraft, but also from pagan religion/myth/cosmology

Maybe a Christian would tell me what the "Christian layer" analog is. The Devil, I suppose: but that doesn't seem quite right.

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

brunians at brunians.org — 19 Jun 2007, 23:38 · in reply to Andy Robertson

The GOO are simply a modern analog of the Greek Titans or the Norse Jotuns

I'm not sure if this is strictly accurate. Also, the titans and the jotunsn are not analagous. The titans are more analagous with the Vanir. The jotuns are, I can't think of a Greek equivalent, but the Indian equivalent would be the Rakshasas probably.

The Aesir and the Vanir are two interrelated clans of gods. There was a war in the past, and a peace treaty (this tradition of a war in the deep past is found all over).

It gets a little complicated, because the aesir and the vanir are all related to the jotuns, in fact they are racially identical, they split off at some time in the past.

I think that all of this is related to various species of humans who were around in the deep past. There were (especially) surviving populations of neanderthals and such in Scandanavia when the aryan types got there.

.

.

Or to put it another way, these pre-human forces of Chaos would in their day have been thought of much as we today think of the Great Old Ones - horrors with nothing quaint or anachronistic in their makeup.

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Vikings, for example, (to pick a set of folk frequently and wrongly thought of as typifying Odinism), should be thought of as pirates using the highest tech weapons and transport; not quaint guys in helmets. Because that is what they were.

Think helecopter gunships and privately owned tanks not wooden ships.
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Achilles in one layer, and Christ in a higher layer (Silk > Odin > is an obvious example)

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Maybe a Christian would tell me what the "Christian layer" analog is. The Devil, I suppose: but that doesn't seem quite right.

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don doggett — 20 Jun 2007, 00:40 · in reply to Andy Robertson

--- Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

Wolfe repeatedly follows his masters Lewis and Tolkien in Christianising pagan myth in multiple levels of narrative analogy.

Yes, but he also incorporates various SF tropes, especially pulpy ones, like Burroughs, Lovecraft, and Howard. Abaia is ridiculously Cthulhuesque in that he invades dreams, lives at the bottom of the ocean, works solely through minions, and will one day "awake" to dominate the world.

Erebus etc thus represent the classical Titans / Jotuns / GOO within the frame of the urth books. They are a theme, not simply from Lovecraft, but also from pagan religion/myth/cosmology

Sure. But I was only speaking of the Lovecraftian aspect, which I believe is strongly there.

Maybe a Christian would tell me what the "Christian layer" analog is. The Devil, I suppose: but that doesn't seem quite right.

The Christian layer is the same as the pagan. Several of the Christian apologists of late antiquity, rather than deny the existence of such beings relegated them to the position of demons who men worshipped in error. Also many Roman Christians incorporated rituals associated with the worship of Horus, with Apollo, and

with Mithras. True paganism (meaning of the Greek and Roman world) and Catholic Christianity are indistinguishable in a lot of strange and interesting ways, especially holidays and rituals. Imo of course

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Jeff Wilson — 20 Jun 2007, 01:58 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I think that all of this is related to various species of humans who were around in the deep past. There were (especially) surviving populations of neanderthals and such in Scandanavia when the aryan types got there.

snicker This is literally the premise of _The Thirteenth Warrior/_Eaters of the Dead_.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com

< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

brunians at brunians.org — 20 Jun 2007, 03:22 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I think that all of this is related to various species of humans who were around in the deep past. There were (especially) surviving populations of neanderthals and such in Scandanavia when the aryan types got there.

snicker This is literally the premise of _The Thirteenth Warrior/_Eaters of the Dead_.

Yes it is.

Why should that be amusing? The idea is not original with me or with Michael Crichton (that book was by Michael Crichton, I believe).

What does Snorre Sturluson mean when he says that such and such a family was 'half-troll'? I'd say that the description of Egil Skallagrimson's skeletal remains (at the very end if "Egil's Saga") is suggestive to say the least.

There's lots of other stuff.

.

don doggett — 20 Jun 2007, 06:22 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

--- brunians at brunians.org wrote:

in reply to:

snicker This is literally the premise of _The Thirteenth Warrior/_Eaters of the Dead_.

Yes it is.

Why should that be amusing? The idea is not original with me or with Michael Crichton (that book was by Michael Crichton, I believe).

It was by Michael Crichton and it's a great historical novel/ forgery. If anyone else had written it, or if he had used a pseudonym it would be much more highly praised than it is.

As for deep history, I have no informed opinion on it, other than it makes for interesting historical fiction (meaning the genre)

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

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Andy Robertson — 20 Jun 2007, 07:31 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org writes:

The GOO are simply a modern analog of the Greek Titans or the Norse Jotuns

I'm not sure if this is strictly accurate.

The actual literary progression in HPL's writing was 1) pseudo-Dunsanaica, with "the little gods of Earth" a close analog of the neo-greek Gods of Pegana 2) intrusion in the neo-Dunsanies of the Other gods or Outer Gods as powerful external enemies of these gods 3) equation of these Outer gods with the GOO, Cthulhu etc.

So I think the linkage is pretty firm.

Also, the titans and the

jotuns are not analagous. The titans are more analagous with the Vanir.

The jotuns are, I can't think of a Greek equivalent,

Typhon maybe. The Titans are supposed to have been the previous generation of gods, but as you mention below the Norse gods are descended from the jotuns, where is the difference?

but the Indian

equivalent would be the Rakshasas probably.

Another IE derived mythology

It gets a little complicated, because the aesir and the vanir are all related to the jotuns, in fact they are racially identical, they split off at some time in the past.

And we all have Deep ONE blood / are the leavings of the Antarctic GOO's laboratories.

It all fits - except that HPL was discarding the archaic elements and remythologising things on

contemporary lines. Or in a nutshell:

LOVECRAFT WAS RIGHT

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Andy Robertson — 20 Jun 2007, 07:34 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett writes:

Sure. But I was only speaking of the Lovecraftian aspect, which I believe is strongly there.

Well HPL pops up in PEACE, as I recall, (though not named) and bits of the fake-but-becoming-real Necronomicon are read, so Wolfe is obviously a fan.

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Batrinque at aol.com — 20 Jun 2007, 10:19 · follows Andy Robertson

In a message dated 6/20/2007 2:22:46 A.M. Eastern Daylight Time, kingwukong at yahoo.com writes:

It was by Michael Crichton and it's a great historical novel/ forgery. If anyone else had written it, or if he had used a pseudonym it would be much more highly praised than it is.

I agree. It is much the fashion to automatically sneer at Crichton and dismiss those novels of his which are actually quite good.

Bruce Trinqu
Amston, CT

Batrinque at aol.com — 20 Jun 2007, 10:21 · follows Batrinque at aol.com

In a message dated 6/19/2007 11:22:30 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

What does Snorre Sturluson mean when he says that such and such a family was 'half-troll'?

An interesting line of thought ... especially if you connect it with the recent "Beowulf & Grendel" movie that was filmed in Iceland.

Bruce Trinqu
Amston, CT

brunians at brunians.org — 20 Jun 2007, 11:03 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

In a message dated 6/19/2007 11:22:30 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time,
brunians at brunians.org writes:

What does Snorre Sturluson mean when he says that such and such a family was 'half-troll'?

An interesting line of thought ... especially if you connect it with the recent "Beowulf & Grendel" movie that was filmed in Iceland.

I probably do, if it's about what I guess it's about.

.

Jeff Wilson — 20 Jun 2007, 12:35 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I think that all of this is related to various species of humans who were around in the deep past. There were (especially) surviving populations of neanderthals and such in Scandanavia when the aryan types got there.

snicker This is literally the premise of _The Thirteenth Warrior/_Eaters of the Dead_.

Yes it is.

Why should that be amusing?

Because of the dual meaning of Aryan (notional fair-skinned race vs. Indo-European root culture). The movie opens with Ibn Faldan, an exiled Persian, being sent to Scandanaavia, and there are *still* proto-humans there, ages after the blondes have taken up residence.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

brunians at brunians.org — 20 Jun 2007, 13:12 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

I think that all of this is related to various species of humans who were around in the deep past. There were (especially) surviving populations of neanderthals and such in Scandanavia when the aryan types got there.

snicker This is literally the premise of _The Thirteenth Warrior/_Eaters of the Dead_.

Yes it is.

Why should that be amusing?

Because of the dual meaning of Aryan (notional fair-skinned race vs. Indo-European root culture).

You see, the first one never occurs to me. It's based on several mistaken notions.

A good starting point for understanding how strange the material is is realizing that Sanskrit is not like other languages. It is fixed. It is a literary language (though there is and tends to be a community of several thousand people who are raised as native speakers), and the when you go to learn it, the very first thing you do is learn to make the 50 or so sounds that are associated with the Sanskrit letters (which can be written, by the way with any arbitrary set of symbols).

Thus, the language is not subject to phoneme drift as a natural language is. In other words, no one knows how old it is. 19th and 20th century scholars used to say it dates back 3500 years or

so: the only thing we know about this number is that it is wrong. It could be 5,000 years old, it could be 50,000 years old.

The movie opens with Ibn Faldan, an exiled Persian, being sent to Scandanaavia, and there are *still* proto-humans there, ages after the blondes have taken up residence.

Yes, this is what the sagas say also. I think you will get in trouble thinking of neanderthals as proto-humans. They are as human as you if not more so. They were skilled engineers, among other things, and also your ancestors if you are even part-European.

.

don doggett — 20 Jun 2007, 15:41 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

--- brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I think you

will get in trouble
thinking of neanderthals as proto-humans. They are
as human as you if not
more so. They were skilled engineers, among other
things, and also your
ancestors if you are even part-European.

I think that much of this is still up for debate,
especially the interbreeding part, but the fact that
there is a debate still validates your argument as
tenable, and elevates it beyond snickering at, imo. I
mean, thirty years ago, we used to think the dinosaurs
died out completely (other than crocodiles and sharks
and such) Now, it's generally accepted that their
descendants are flying outside our window every day.
But don't worry, we'll kill 'em eventually.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Michael Straight — 20 Jun 2007, 19:31 · in reply to don doggett

On 6/19/07, don doggett <kingwukong at yahoo.com> wrote:
True paganism (meaning of the Greek and
Roman world) and Catholic Christianity are
indistinguishable in a lot of strange and interesting
ways, especially holidays and rituals. Imo of course

G.K. Chesterton liked to point out that the only modern tradition that could genuinely trace its roots back to Greek and Roman paganism was Christianity.

Rostrum

brunians at brunians.org — 20 Jun 2007, 21:49 · in reply to don doggett

--- brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I think you will get in trouble thinking of neanderthals as proto-humans. They are as human as you if not more so. They were skilled engineers, among other things, and also your ancestors if you are even part-European.

I think that much of this is still up for debate,

Some of us are on one side or another of that debate.

especially the interbreeding part,

Look around you, especially if you have Polynesian, Norwegian or Australian aboriginal neighbors (that's 'European' in a very broad sense: everyone here knows that native Australians are born brown-haired or even blonde).

but the fact that
there is a debate still validates your argument as
tenable, and elevates it beyond snickering at, imo.

Thank you.

I
mean, thirty years ago, we used to think the dinosaurs
died out completely (other than crocodiles and sharks
and such) Now, it's generally accepted that their
descendants are flying outside our window every day.
But don't worry, we'll kill 'em eventually.

The black ones are smart.

They'll be here after we're gone.

.

Jeff Wilson — 21 Jun 2007, 01:03 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Yes, this is what the sagas say also. I think you will get in trouble thinking of neanderthals as proto-humans. They are as human as you if not more so. They were skilled engineers, among other things, and also your ancestors if you are even part-European.

If the neandethals were human, why is there a distinction made?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
< <http://www.io.com/~jwilson> >

Lane Haygood — 21 Jun 2007, 01:07 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Hi all. Long time lurker, first time poster.

Neanderthals were not "human," in the sense of being homo sapiens. They were another species, human-like, but not human.

Here's a wiki link... sorry, it's the best I could do on short notice.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal>

Lane

On Jun 20, 2007, at 8:03 PM, Jeff Wilson wrote:
brunians at brunians.org wrote:

Yes, this is what the sagas say also. I think you will get in trouble thinking of neanderthals as proto-humans. They are as human as you if not more so. They were skilled engineers, among other things, and also your ancestors if you are even part-European.

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Batrinque at aol.com — 21 Jun 2007, 01:12 · follows Lane Haygood

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:07:33 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, lhaygood at gmail.com writes:

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Here's a wiki link... sorry, it's the best I could do on short notice.
[_http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal_](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal) (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neanderthal>)

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to presentday humans.

Bruce Trinqué
Amston, CT

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 01:14 · in reply to Lane Haygood

Hi all. Long time lurker, first time poster.

Neanderthals were not "human," in the sense of being homo sapiens.
They were another species, human-like, but not human.

There are several opinions floating around about this. Mine happens to be in the minority this decade. It's still correct, as everyone reading this after 2050 or so is aware.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 01:15 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to presentday humans.

Maltese teeth.

.

Batrinque at aol.com — 21 Jun 2007, 01:21 · follows brunians at brunians.org

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:15:12 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Maltese teeth.

Is there DNA evidence there?

Bruce Trinqué
41°37'52"N 72°22'29"W

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 01:25 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to
presentday
humans.

Maltese teeth.

I figured I'd expand (though of course everyone knows what I am talking about, here, right?).

Some Neanderthal skulls got funny teeth. Supposedly unique to the separate species that didn't interbreed. Except a bunch of Maltese people have teeth like this. How'd that happen?

There's all sorts of bogosity in paleoanthropology. Did you know there are a bunch of these academic scientists who seriously maintain that human beings didn't have speech before 70,000 years ago or so? They were every way identical to us, they just couldn't talk, poor things.

Where do they get these ideas?

The species is a million years old and for 990,000 of those years we were sort of half-smart animals scraping out a living. Then, all of a sudden, ten thousand years ago, something happened, and now we're flying in space.

Two kinds of people who didn't look any different than hottentots and swedes hung out around each other for tens of thousands of years, with interbreedable genomes, and none of them had children.

People want to believe these kinds of things, they can. I'll pass.

.

Batrinque at aol.com — 21 Jun 2007, 01:31 · follows brunians at brunians.org

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:26:32 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Some Neanderthal skulls got funny teeth. Supposedly unique to the separate species that didn't interbreed. Except a bunch of Maltese people have teeth like this.

I wonder if there has been any genetic testing of native Maltese to determine whether there is any interesting DNA floating around.

Bruce Trinqué
41°37'52"N 72°22'29"W

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 01:39 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:26:32 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Some Neanderthal skulls got funny teeth. Supposedly unique to the seperate species that didn't interbreed. Except a bunch of Maltese people have teeth like this.

I wonder if there has been any genetic testing of native Maltese to determine whether there is any interesting DNA floating around.

Dunno. The debate is mostly academics swearing at each other and denigrating each other's evidence, as near as I can tell.

I don't engage too much in the debate. I got my ideas, they're not currently well-accepted, I believe that they will be pretty soon (though possibly not within my lifetime).

To me, the question is basically whether Plato, Snorre Sturluson and the Mahabharata are more or less reliable than a bunch of twentieth and early twenty-first century theoreticians. That's a no-brainer.

.

Ranjit Bhatnagar — 21 Jun 2007, 01:46 · in reply to don doggett

I'm sorry, but every time I read the subject line "The problem of Cthulhu" I think of the famous song from that classic musical.

How do you solve a problem like Cthulhu?

How do you catch a shoggoth and pin it down?

How do you find a word that means Cthulhu?

A gibbering figment! Ia ia fthagn!

Batrinque at aol.com — 21 Jun 2007, 01:46 · follows Ranjit Bhatnagar

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:40:01 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

The debate is mostly academics swearing at each other and denigrating each other's evidence, as near as I can tell.

The problem, of course, with arguing on the basis of skull shape and such is that it is rather too easy for subjectivity to creep in. It would be nice to have something firmer in hand.

Bruce Trinkle
Amston, CT

Matthew King — 21 Jun 2007, 02:21 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Jun 20, 2007, at 8:39 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

To me, the question is basically whether Plato, Snorre Sturluson and the

Mahabharata are more or less reliable than a bunch of twentieth and early

twenty-first century theoreticians. That's a no-brainer.

I think I may love you.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 02:28 · in reply to Matthew King

On Jun 20, 2007, at 8:39 PM, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

To me, the question is basically whether Plato, Snorre Sturluson and the Mahabharata are more or less reliable than a bunch of twentieth and early twenty-first century theoreticians. That's a no-brainer.

I think I may love you.

You're sweet. But agape, or philia, please, not eros.

.

David Duffy — 21 Jun 2007, 02:47 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Wed, 20 Jun 2007, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

In a message dated 6/20/2007 9:26:32 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Some Neanderthal skulls got funny teeth. Supposedly unique to the separate species that didn't interbreed. Except a bunch of Maltese people have teeth like this.

I wonder if there has been any genetic testing of native Maltese to determine whether there is any interesting DNA floating around.

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To me, the question is basically whether Plato, Snorre Sturluson and the Mahabharata are more or less reliable than a bunch of twentieth and early twenty-first century theoreticians. That's a no-brainer.

The problem is that the scanty mitochondrial DNA evidence says they did not contribute to any modern human populations. It seems not impossible to me that they could have interbred. I don't know whether hobbits could interbreed with humans either, even though they may have coexisted more recently than Neandertals.

Slightly in the spirit of the subject line, has anyone else read Jeffrey E. Barlough's channelling of HPL and Dickens?

David Duffy.

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes — 21 Jun 2007, 03:18 · in reply to Ranjit Bhatnagar

On 6/20/07, Ranjit Bhatnagar <ranjit at moonmilk.com> wrote:

I'm sorry, but every time I read the subject line "The problem of Cthulhu" I think of the famous song from that classic musical.

How do you solve a problem like Cthulhu?

How do you catch a shoggoth and pin it down?

How do you find a word that means Cthulhu?

A gibbering figment! la ia fthagn!

Well, there is "A Shoggoth on the Roof..."

<http://www.yog-sothoth.com/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=74>

Dan'I Danehy-Oakes, writer, trainer, bon vivant

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/sturgeonslawyer>

<http://www.danehyoakes.com>

Soon, where Toon Town once stood will be a string of gas stations, inexpensive motels, restaurants that serve rapidly prepared food. Tire salons, automobile dealerships and wonderful, wonderful billboards reaching as far as the eye can see. My God, it'll be beautiful.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 03:26 · in reply to David Duffy

On Wed, 20 Jun 2007, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

I don't engage too much in the debate. I got my ideas, they're not currently well-accepted, I believe that they will be pretty soon (though possibly not within my lifetime).

To me, the question is basically whether Plato, Snorre Sturluson and the Mahabharata are more or less reliable than a bunch of twentieth and early twenty-first century theoreticians. That's a no-brainer.

The problem is that the scanty mitochondrial DNA evidence says they did not contribute to any modern human populations.

Remember African Eve? Don't hear too much about her anymore.

The reason you don't is because after they presented their paper, someone went over their evidence and pointed out that it was messed up: that it is true that they could trace each sample to their posited African Eve, or they could work the same sample a slightly different way and come up with other Eves, both in and out of Africa.

In other words, I don't have any problem at all with out understanding of the DNA evidence, mitochondrial or otherwise, being incomplete or poorly understood.

I'll believe we are getting sort of a handle on DNA when someone can splain to me this unfolding trick that you do to get from a fertilized cell to a human or a crow or whatever.

What I have a problem with is two human populations living side by side ad engaging in no fuckery.

It seems not impossible to me that they could have interbred. I don't know whether hobbits could interbreed with humans either, even though they may have coexisted more recently than Neandertals.

My position is that they never did die out but bred in with the dominant population. My evidence is the literally thousands of Norwegians, Polynesians, Australian natives and others who have obvious neanderthal characteristics, thick bones, browridges etc.

It wouldn't surprise me if the hobbitses didn't die out either.

.

Andy Robertson — 21 Jun 2007, 06:57 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

brunians at brunians.org writes:

The species is a million years old and for 990,000 of those years we were sort of half-smart animals scraping out a living. Then, all of a sudden, ten thousand years ago, something happened, and now we're flying in space.

Could be a mutation.

Genetic studies claim to show that genes that control the brain are evolving fast, and by fast I mean in historical, not geological, time.

Bruce Lahn claims that one gene that first appeared in Europe (by mutation, in one person) about 4000 BC has now spread to a quarter of the human race.

It must do something important.

<http://chronicle.uchicago.edu/050922/brainevolution.shtml>

That's a startling fact if you like. If true.

I like your other ideas but don't much credit the interbreeding thing.

OTOH Neanderthals as grendels I can swallow.

- hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

matthew at calmeilles.co.uk — 21 Jun 2007, 07:11 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

Batrinque at aol.com wrote:

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to presentday humans.

Bruce Trinke
Amston, CT

<http://genetics.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pgen.0020105.eor>

"Using sequence data from the Environmental Genome Project, we find strong evidence for ancient admixture in both a European and a West African population ($p \sim 10^{-7}$), with contributions to the modern gene pool of at least 5%. While Neanderthals form an obvious archaic source population candidate in Europe, there is not yet a clear source population candidate in West Africa."

don doggett — 21 Jun 2007, 07:11 · in reply to Andy Robertson

--- Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

I like your other ideas but don't much credit the interbreeding thing.

OTOH Neanderthals as grendels I can swallow.

How about this one?

from <http://xchar.home.att.net/n2a/medhyp.htm>

"The Neanderthals, I propose, disappeared from Europe and Asia for the same reason that the mammoths disappeared: we ate them."

I hear they taste like shoggoth.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 07:16 · in reply to Andy Robertson

brunians at brunians.org writes:

The species is a million years old and for 990,000 of those years we were sort of half-smart animals scraping out a living. Then, all of a sudden, ten thousand years ago, something happened, and now we're flying in space.

Could be a mutation.

It could be not true.

Being as we have all of these stories about previous cycles of civilization and advanced technology, I'm going to go with the latter. You have to do what pleases you.

.

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 08:39 · in reply to matthew at calmeilles.co.uk

matthew at calmeilles.co.uk writes:

Batrinque at aol.com wrote:

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to presentday humans.

<http://genetics.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pgen.0020105.eor>

"Using sequence data from the Environmental Genome Project, we find strong evidence for ancient admixture in both a European and a West African population ($p \sim 10^{-7}$), with contributions to the modern gene pool of at least 5%. While Neanderthals form an obvious archaic source population candidate in Europe, there is not yet a clear source population candidate in West Africa."

Dude.

.

Batrinque at aol.com — 21 Jun 2007, 10:28 · follows brunians at brunians.org

In a message dated 6/20/2007 11:26:46 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Remember African Eve? Don't hear too much about her anymore.

The reason you don't is because after they presented their paper, someone went over their evidence and pointed out that it was messed up: that it is true that they could trace each sample to their posited African Eve, or they could work the same sample a slightly different way and come up with other Eves, both in and out of Africa.

And subsequently someone went over the counterargument and concluded that THAT analysis was wrong. African Eve is alive and well, and so is a later African Adam. Recent African Origin at the moment at least widely accepted as being the best model for present human ancestry.

Bruce Trinkle
Amston, CT

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 10:44 · in reply to Batrinque at aol.com

In a message dated 6/20/2007 11:26:46 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time, brunians at brunians.org writes:

Remember African Eve? Don't hear too much about her anymore.

The reason you don't is because after they presented their paper, someone went over their evidence and pointed out that it was messed up: that it is true that they could trace each sample to their posited African Eve, or they could work the same sample a slightly different way and come up with other Eves, both in and out of Africa.

And subsequently someone went over the counterargument and concluded that THAT analysis was wrong. African Eve is alive and well, and so is a later African Adam. Recent African Origin at the moment at least widely accepted as being the best model for present human ancestry.

... by the people who accept it.

Then there's the others, that don't, that figure that group (A) is screwing up somehow again.

And here we are.

Like I say: if your theory requires that humans not fuck, your theory is wrong.

.

Andy Robertson — 21 Jun 2007, 13:02 · in reply to don doggett

don doggett writes:

How about this one?

from <http://xchar.home.att.net/n2a/medhyp.htm>

"The Neanderthals, I propose, disappeared from Europe and Asia for the same reason that the mammoths disappeared: we ate them."

I hear they taste like shoggoth.

Likely enough. Genocide is the rule in hominid group interactions, after all.

- hartshorn

<http://www.thenightland.co.uk>

01273-488272 / 0777-214-9545

Recursive Loop — 21 Jun 2007, 15:42 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Greetings:

"The species is a million years old and for 990,000 of those years we were sort of half-smart animals scraping out a living. Then, all of a sudden, ten thousand years ago, something happened, and now we're flying in space."

"Brain Wave" by Poul Anderson. We exited this galactic cloud, see...

FPK3

Tim Walters — 21 Jun 2007, 16:13 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

Like I say: if your theory requires that humans not fuck, your theory is wrong.

It's a good thing there are no such theories in play, then.

Mutual infertility in no way implies a lack of fucky-wucky.

Tim Walters | <http://doubtfulpalace.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 17:07 · in reply to Tim Walters

Like I say: if your theory requires that humans not fuck, your theory is wrong.

It's a good thing there are no such theories in play, then.

Mutual infertility in no way implies a lack of fucky-wucky.

On the other hand:

matthew at calmeilles.co.uk writes:

Batrinque at aol.com wrote:

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to presentday humans.

<http://genetics.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pgen.0020105.eor>

"Using sequence data from the Environmental Genome Project, we find strong evidence for ancient admixture in both a European and a West African population ($p \sim 10^{-7}$), with contributions to the modern gene pool of at least 5%. While Neanderthals form an obvious archaic source population candidate in Europe, there is not yet a clear source population candidate in West Africa."

don doggett — 21 Jun 2007, 17:13 · in reply to Andy Robertson

--- Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

Likely enough. Genocide is the rule in hominid group interactions, after all.

Oh, I don't know. I think it's a pretty modern innovation. It seems that mass acculturation has been the rule for most of human history. Thus the mongols in China, the Persian, Parthian, and Roman empires, blah blee, blah blah. That's one reason I think that homo s. and homo n. might have interbred. The reason I don't think that they were lunch is that they appear to be larger, stronger, as smart as, and as technologically advanced as the homo sapiens they had encountered. Maybe disease got them, but I don't think they were massacred.

Don

The Evangelists: a Lesser Apocrypha

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=178109961>

Tim Walters — 21 Jun 2007, 17:16 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On the other hand:

So when a study disagrees with your theory, it's because the archaeologist is a bumbling idiot who's no match for a meticulous researcher like Plato, but when it agrees with your theory, it's taken as gospel?

I'm quite open to the idea that Neanderthals interbred with modern humans. I just don't like your ongoing caricature of the opposing position.

Tim Walters | <http://doubtfulpalace.com>

brunians at brunians.org — 21 Jun 2007, 17:31 · in reply to Tim Walters

On the other hand:

So when a study disagrees with your theory, it's because the archaeologist is a bumbling idiot who's no match for a meticulous researcher like Plato, but when it agrees with your theory, it's taken as gospel?

I wouldn't say gospel. Gospel is revealed and unquestionable (by the theory, anyway).

I'd say that if it agrees with my theory I'm more willing to look on it favorably. Of course it helps

that the people over on that side of the argument have been arguing among themselves over which version of their story is the correct one (the un-Eving and re-Eving of African Eve that has been referred to previously).

I've looked into it extensively and I am comfortable with the position I have chosen.

I'm quite open to the idea that Neanderthals interbred with modern humans.
I just don't like your ongoing caricature of the opposing position.

You're allowed. There's probably stuff about you I wouldn't like.

.

Tony Ellis — 21 Jun 2007, 19:50 · follows brunians at brunians.org

Kieran Mullen wrote:

"The Friendship Light" is, I believe, a Lovecraft mythos story.

It's in "Innocents Abroad." You do have to read a bit between the lines, though.

Yes, the narrator's friends do sound like a bunch of fun guys, don't they?

Iorwerth Thomas — 21 Jun 2007, 22:13 · in reply to Tony Ellis

From: "Tony Ellis" <tonyellis69 at btopenworld.com>

Kieran Mullen wrote:

"The Friendship Light" is, I believe, a Lovecraft mythos story.

It's in "Innocents Abroad." You do have to read a bit between the lines, though.

Yes, the narrator's friends do sound like a bunch of fun guys, don't they?

"The Tree is My Hat" also has Lovecraftian undertones, if I recall correctly.

Daniel D Jones — 22 Jun 2007, 11:28 · in reply to brunians at brunians.org

On Wednesday 20 June 2007 21:25, brunians at brunians.org wrote:

To date, no DNA evidence exists of any genetic contribution to
presentday
humans.

Maltese teeth.

I figured I'd expand (though of course everyone knows what I am talking
about, here, right?).

Some Neanderthal skulls got funny teeth. Supposedly unique to the separate
species that didn't interbreed. Except a bunch of Maltese people have
teeth like this. How'd that happen?

There's all sorts of bogosity in paleoanthropology. Did you know there are
a bunch of these academic scientists who seriously maintain that human
beings didn't have speech before 70,000 years ago or so? They were every
way identical to us, they just couldn't talk, poor things.

Where do they get these ideas?

The species is a million years old and for 990,000 of those years we were
sort of half-smart animals scraping out a living. Then, all of a sudden,
ten thousand years ago, something happened, and now we're flying in space.

Two kinds of people who didn't look any different than hottentots and swedes hung out around each other for tens of thousands of years, with interbreedable genomes, and none of them had children.

People want to believe these kinds of things, they can. I'll pass.

I'm not sure if you're trolling or really believe what you've posted above, but what you wrote matches little or nothing that I've read on the subject. They're more like caricatures of actual anthropological positions and theories. This list isn't the place for such discussions, so I'll bow out but anyone interested, please take the time to do some Googling and see what's actually being said rather than take a second or third hand account of it.

Daniel D Jones — 22 Jun 2007, 11:32 · in reply to don doggett

On Thursday 21 June 2007 03:11, don doggett wrote:

--- Andy Robertson <andywrobertson at clara.co.uk> wrote:

I like your other ideas but don't much credit the interbreeding thing.

OTOH Neanderthals as grendels I can swallow.

How about this one?

from <http://xchar.home.att.net/n2a/medhyp.htm>

"The Neanderthals, I propose, disappeared from Europe and Asia for the same reason that the mammoths disappeared: we ate them."

I suspect he's probably more right than he does. Neanderthals probably DID disappear for a reason similar to that of the mammoths.

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/05/ice-age.html>